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STUDIES IN MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN CULTURE
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Identity, Literacy, and Communication in the Middle Ages

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Chapter Ten

Saints and Political Identities in Late Medieval Lund and Uppsala

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The liturgy of a particular ecclesiastical province, both in terms of the calendar—the selection of feasts to be celebrated during the course of the liturgical year—and the level of liturgical dignity accorded to each of those feasts, may provide a good deal of insight into the history as well as the ongoing interests and priorities of that province. During the late Middle Ages, the period that in the Nordic region might justifiably be spoken of as the era of the Kalmar Union, it is possible to observe differing trends concerning the veneration and celebration of what might be called the Nordic national saints, saints whose cults originated in any of the various countries of the Nordic region, or were regarded as particularly emblematic of these nations and their churches. These differences can be observed at the level of diocese and archdiocese, but they are particularly evident in a comparison between the Archdioceses of Lund and Uppsala, the medieval centers of the Danish and Swedish churches, respectively. The presence or absence of certain saints in the calendars of the printed late medieval liturgical books of these ecclesiastical centers may profitably be examined in relation to aspects of secular and ecclesiastical politics directly, but not exclusively, connected to the Kalmar Union.

There are obvious reasons why the cult of saints as practiced at the leading cathedrals of any of the three Nordic kingdoms might be viewed as having a political aspect. There is, of course, the often-observed point that the division typically made in the present day between religious and secular spheres of life would have been utterly foreign to people living in the Middle Ages. As chosen intercessors, saints (especially favored patron saints) might be assumed or expected to take an interest in or show support for the causes that engaged their devotees. In some cases, and for
various reasons, certain saints may also have come to be viewed as having a symbolic role in a political context or conflict. To cite two well-known examples, in Norway and Sweden there were strong medieval traditions that regarded all good, old, established, just law as stemming from St. Olav or St. Eric. These saints were regarded or promoted as eternal protectors of their respective kingdoms. Subsequent rulers were often, perhaps especially in Norway, seen as receiving their kingship from these royal saints. Monarchs during the Kalmar Union period showed strong awareness of the symbolic importance of national, and perhaps especially, royal saints, and both moved to exploit its potential and assumed and sought the intercession of these saints on their own behalf. This may be particularly evident in the naming of two rulers of the Kalmar Union, Olav Håkonsson, the son of Queen Margaret I and heir to Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, and the heir Margaret adopted following Olav’s death, Eric of Pomerania, originally named Bugislav. It seems quite clear that the names of these two heirs to the Union throne were chosen for their saintly resonance, as a means of emphasizing the legitimacy of the young princes’ claims. Indeed, the name chosen for the second of these two princes may have had double resonance, since efforts (including the production of a legend and a collection of miracles) had been made to promote the sanctity of another Eric, the Danish king Eric (Ploughpenny) (d. 1250). Although these efforts did not lead to canonization, a number of Danish guilds were dedicated to this Danish “St. Eric.” Similar thinking may be evident in the fact that a later Union monarch, Christian I, named his two eldest sons Olav and Canute, and may also have had a son named Eric, who died shortly after birth, in 1478.

Another contributing factor to the connection between the cult of the saints in the cathedrals and the realm of politics was the role of prominent members of the clergy in the governing councils (Danish rigsråd, Swedish riksråd) of the various realms. In all three of the Nordic kingdoms, the archbishops tended to be regarded as the leading members of the councils, and other bishops also tended to hold powerful positions and wield political influence. Thus, there is not necessarily a clear boundary between ecclesiastical and secular political office in the late medieval Nordic region. Likewise, although many archbishops and cathedral chapters championed the freedom of the church, in practice, many rulers (not least Union monarchs) exercised significant influence over the church in a number of different ways, including the selection of archbishops, bishops,
and other prelates, the donation or confiscation of property, and sometimes even physical threats toward or imprisonment of clergy.

Among discussions of the cult of the saints, especially saints of Nordic origin, in the Nordic ecclesiastical provinces, several works stand out. Sven Helander’s *Den medeltida Uppsalaliturgin* discusses the history and development of the liturgical traditions of Uppsala Cathedral from their twelfth-century beginnings to the end of the Middle Ages. In the course of his investigation, he examines a large number of specific cults, including those of the explicitly Swedish saints discussed in this essay. Anna Minara Ciardi has discussed many of these same cults, among others, in her “Saints and Cathedral Culture in Scandinavia,” with a focus mainly on the period before the year 1200. Haki Antonsson has examined the construction and reconstruction of narratives and cults of missionary saints as they arose in various parts of the Nordic region, and noted how trends reflect other aspects of ecclesiastical and political history. Also relevant to the present discussion is Sara E. Ellis Nilsson’s “Holy Validation: Saints and Early Liturgy in Scandinavia,” which argues that, perhaps especially in Sweden, cults of local missionary saints were promoted by clerical elites specifically as a means of legitimizing the particular location of new bishoprics.

The premise of this chapter is that certain trends or tendencies apparent in the relationship between two of the Nordic kingdoms during the period of the Kalmar Union, and even more importantly, the relationship between the Archdiocese of Lund and the Archdiocese of Uppsala, may also be reflected in the selection of saints venerated in each of these church provinces, as represented by their printed liturgical books from the end of the medieval period. Alf Härdelin has cautioned that such liturgical books represent an ideal version of the liturgy that may or may not reflect actual practice at the cathedral itself, let alone in more or less distant parish churches. However, given that the very bodies responsible for the development of the liturgy and the production of the books that document and transmit it include some of the individuals most closely involved in political discussions concerning the Nordic ecclesiastical provinces and kingdoms of the late Middle Ages, the presence or absence of saints associated with each of those kingdoms in the liturgical tradition of the respective provinces seems worthy of investigation.

One important aspect of this discussion is the question of liturgical degree or degree of veneration. This term refers to the extent or scope of the divine office performed on a given feast day. Perhaps the most important
distinction in degree had to do with whether a feast was celebrated with a liturgy of its own (this regardless of whether the feast was celebrated with a proper office or one drawn from the common of saints). Feasts of the lowest liturgical degree, _commemoratio_ were typically celebrated in abbreviated form at the end of the various offices for the more important feast of the day.\(^\text{10}\) More important feasts celebrated with a complete liturgy of their own would typically be, at least in the Nordic region, celebrated with either three or nine lessons in matins, depending on their rank, and with two vespers. The higher feasts for which the matins included nine readings, typically drawn from the saint’s _vita_, could be further ranked. The lowest of these ranks is _simples_, followed (with some variation between the Nordic bishoprics) by _semiduplex_, _duplex_, and the highest rank, _totum duplex_ (in some areas _solenn_). In the Nordic region in particular, feasts of higher degree were celebrated with additional or more extensive antiphons in relation to feasts of lower degree. In Lund, the dignity of a particular feast could be further specified in the breviary by a notation of who was to celebrate it.\(^\text{11}\)

If we examine the cult of the Nordic saints in later medieval Denmark, especially in Lund, as exemplified by the printed liturgical books from the end of the period, a number of interesting trends can be observed. For example, although King Canute IV (ca. 1080–1086), who would later be venerated as the martyr, St. Canute the King (_Canutus rex_), is associated with Lund Cathedral from its very beginnings, he is mentioned in early sources from Lund to a greater extent as an honored donor and founder of the cathedral than a venerated saint.\(^\text{12}\) According to Curt Wallin, much of the medieval cult of St. Canute was centered on the guilds dedicated to him, and the earliest evidence of a guild of St. Canute in Lund dates from about 1250.\(^\text{13}\) The earliest documented altar dedicated to the saint (together with the Virgin Mary) dates from 1368, and it was founded through the testament of a member of the guild of St. Canute in Lund. From the beginning of the fifteenth century, however, the cult seems to gain a different status at the cathedral. In 1405, the archbishop, Jacob Gertsen Ulfstand, made a donation to an additional altar, which he had founded in honor of the Virgin Mary, St. Laurence, and St. Canute the King.\(^\text{14}\) This may be the earliest intimation that St. Canute has come to be regarded as a co-patron of the cathedral, together with the Virgin and St. Laurence, to whom the high altar was dedicated in 1145. Moreover, an increasing emphasis on the feast of St. Canute in indulgences can also be seen, beginning in about 1400 and continuing throughout the century.\(^\text{15}\) Other
indications of the increasing veneration of St. Canute at Lund Cathedral included new reliquaries, such as an arm reliquary containing an arm bone of the saint as well as his inclusion in visual depictions. One such depiction, described by C. G Bruinus, was on a processional banner, while another is the sandstone relief carved by stone master Adam van Düren in the early sixteenth century. In this stone carving, which was originally placed on an exterior wall of the cathedral, St. Canute is depicted in the company of St. Laurence and the Virgin Mary, the two original patrons of Lund. Alongside each of the figures is a coat of arms, the one beside St. Laurence representing the king, beside the Virgin Mary the arms of the queen, and beside St. Canute, those of the archbishop. Like a processional banner, this relief would have been easily viewed by the general populace of the town. Perhaps most important of all were the expanded offices for St. Canute in the late medieval liturgy, which underline his importance in the cathedral cult. In the late medieval breviary, the feast of St. Canute, July 10, is celebrated with the highest degree, and with an octave. Further, the feast of the relics is celebrated on the day following St. Canute’s, and it includes a special antiphon. It is interesting to speculate about the reasons for the increasing emphasis on the cult of this particular saint in Lund during this period. It seems likely that it is a response to the widespread popularity and powerful symbolic importance of St. Eric in Uppsala (and the whole of Sweden), and perhaps to an even greater degree, of St. Olav in Nidaros and the whole of Norway. Particularly when Denmark has entered into a union with these other two kingdoms, balance, if nothing else, would seem to require a royal patron saint for the Danish kingdom and the Danish archdiocese. As Ellen Jørgensen has remarked,
St. Canute the King is by no means the only Danish saint to appear in the liturgical calendar of the Lund Breviary of 1517. This calendar includes all of the Danish saints who occur in the late medieval calendars of the other Danish bishoprics, but by no means all of the cults that were promoted during the Danish Middle Ages. Among the Danish saints who do not appear in the late medieval Lund calendar, nor in any of the other published calendar of late medieval Denmark are St. Margareta of Roskilde, St. Nicholas of Århus, and St. Andreas of Slagelse. Local and regional veneration has been documented for these saints, especially for the first two, on whose behalf papal canonization processes were initiated, though these were ultimately unsuccessful. This point highlights one of the most notable distinctions between Lund and Uppsala. In the late medieval liturgy from Uppsala, each Swedish diocese contributes at least one saint of its own. In contrast to many of the Danish saints, it is not clear that papal canonization was ever sought, let alone conferred, for Swedish saints before St. Bridget. This notwithstanding, by the late Middle Ages, every Swedish diocese promoted the cult of at least one saint of local origin, whether that saint was a missionary bishop or abbot, a pious laywoman or layman, or a renowned mystic, such as Linköping’s St. Bridget. Haki Antonsson has noted that while the Danish Church certainly promoted (or attempted to promote) the cults of a number of local saints (as well as a number of dynastic ones), “it was only in Sweden that cults of missionary saints became a notable feature of the medieval religious landscape, especially as patron saints of the Swedish bishoprics.”

The Danish saints receiving the highest degree of veneration in the Lund calendar are the two royal saints, St. Canute the King and St. Canute the Duke (Canatus dux, or Canute Lavard). The feast of St. Canute Lavard on January 7 is celebrated with the degree of festum vicariorum, while the feast of St. Canute the King on July 10 is celebrated with the very highest degree, festum prelatorum. A third saint who was well known during his lifetime, not only in Denmark but more widely, was Abbot William. His feast was celebrated on June 16 with the degree of nine lessons. St. William was a confessor, not a martyr, and was a well-known participant in the international ecclesiastical politics and intellectual discussion during his lifetime. He was particularly known and admired for his preserved collection of letters, the Epistolae abbatis Wilhelmi de Paraclito. Although originally from Paris, William was called to Denmark in 1165 to take over the Augustinian community of Eskilsø. Following his death in 1202, he was canonized by Pope Honorius III in 1224.
Like St. Canute the King and St. Canute Lavard, as well as St. William, St. Ketill appears to have been a known, historical person. He is said to have been dean of the chapter of Augustinian canons at Viborg, and to have died in 1150. His feast was celebrated in Lund on July 12, directly following the feast of St. Canute and the feast of the relics. Finally, St. Theodgar (Thøger), a missionary saint and church-builder said to have been part of the entourage of St. Olav before arriving in Vestervig, was celebrated in Lund on October 30 with the degree of nine lessons. It is interesting to note that he is the only one of the officially recognized national saints of Denmark who is explicitly described as a missionary. It is also interesting to note that the Archdiocese of Lund does not seem to have sought to promote the cult of a local martyr (or other saint) of its own in the way that, for example, the cults of St. Olav and St. Eric were promoted in Nidaros and Uppsala. For each of these, the archdiocese is the absolute center of the cult of the royal martyr. This is not necessarily because of lack of opportunity. In 1383, the archbishop of Lund instructed a group of prelates and canons to bring the remains of a local woman, Magnhild of Fulltøfta, a murder victim reputed to have performed miracles after her death, to the cathedral. In spite of this translation, no further attempt to promote a cult of Magnhild seems to have been made. It might indeed be argued that an ordinary laywoman would make a poor patron for the center of the Danish Church, even if the Swedish diocese of Skara counted just such a woman as its particular patron saint. Instead, however, the cathedral placed increasing emphasis on the cult of St. Canute the King. In this case, it would appear that the status of St. Canute as a royal martyr, and increasingly, as a symbol and intercessor for the kingdom of Denmark, were of greater importance for the promotion of his cult in Lund than the fact that the saint’s cult was actually centered in the diocese of Odense.

Interestingly, nearly as many Swedish saints were venerated in late medieval Lund as Danish ones, and in some cases their feasts were celebrated with relatively high degree. In fact, three of the four Swedish saints in the calendar were celebrated with the degree of duplex. The first of these is St. Henry, whose feast was celebrated in Lund on January 19. St. Henry was the particular patron saint for the diocease of Åbo, which encompassed much of present-day Finland. Together with Sweden’s royal martyr, St. Eric, the saintly bishop is said to have undertaken a mission to convert the Finns during the later twelfth century, and he is said to have died a martyr’s death there. As Tuomas Heikkilä notes, the liturgy of St. Henry in the Lund breviary of 1517 contains significant
portions of his legend, in a form that shows strong similarity to that from Linköping.  

Not surprisingly, given his close association with St. Eric, St. Henry was a saint of particular importance for Uppsala Cathedral, where, according to Sven Helander, he came to be venerated as a third patron saint alongside St. Laurence and St. Eric.  

It is interesting to speculate whether this association, as much as the specific connection to the diocese of Åbo, gives St. Henry his status in Lund. The Swedish saints in the Lund breviary are those who might be considered to have the best claim of being national rather than just regional or provincial saints. A second of Sweden’s many missionary and bishop saints was venerated in Lund on February 15, with the degree of nine lessons.  

This was St. Sigfrid, who has been associated with a bishop by that name who, according to Adam of Bremen, came from England to undertake missionary work in Norway and Sweden. According to the list of kings appended to the Older Law of Västergötland, Sigfrid baptized Olof Skötkonung, the first Christian king of Sweden in the early eleventh century, before continuing his career as the first bishop of Växjö.  

The earliest legend of St. Sigfrid presents him as the archbishop of York, who leaves his post to travel to Sweden via Denmark. This association certainly played a role in Lund Cathedral’s acquisition of a reliquary that came to be regarded as one of its particular treasures. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, Peder Lykke, a canon from Lund (later to become archbishop) was sent to England to begin negotiations concerning the marriage of Philippa, daughter of King Henry IV, and Eric of Pomerania, the heir to the Kalmar Union. When he returned to Lund, Peder Lykke brought with him a gift from the English king, a reliquary of gilt silver, containing the relics of the “English missionary St. Sigfrid.” It seems clear that King Henry’s gift must have been intended to underscore the connections between the kingdoms, which would be brought closer through the marriage, and it undoubtedly had the effect of raising St. Sigfrid’s profile at Lund. By the later Middle Ages, too, Sigfrid had come to be regarded as a patron saint and “apostle” not only of the diocese of Växjö, which claimed him as its founder, but of Sweden in general, and his feast was celebrated with high degree in all of the Swedish bishoprics.  

According to Toni Schmid, the cult of St. Sigfrid had been introduced to Denmark by Peder Jensen Lodehat, who served as bishop of Växjö from 1382 to 1386, and would later become bishop of the Danish sees of Århus and Roskilde.  

The third Swedish saint venerated in Lund, according to the late medieval breviary, is St. Eric, Sweden’s royal martyr, whose feast day of
May 18 is celebrated with the degree of duplex. St. Eric is said in his late thirteenth-century legend to have fallen in an uneven battle against invading troops led by a Danish usurper, Prince Magnus. The legend of St. Eric establishes him as a builder of churches, a lawgiver, and the epitome of a just monarch. By the early fifteenth century, Eric had come to be considered the patron saint of the Swedish realm, and a powerful symbol for those who laid claim to it. The term “St. Eric’s Law” had come to be used for good, old, established Swedish legal tradition, and claimants to the Swedish throne often portrayed themselves as heirs of St. Eric. In the case of St. Eric, it appears that the invocation of the saint to support a claim to the Swedish throne may rely on a claim of genealogical descent to a greater degree than for St. Olav in Norway. For example, Carl M. Kjellberg has argued that rhymed chronicles composed during the reign of King Karl Knutsson (1448–1457, 1464–1465, 1467–1470) actually made the false claim that Karl was descended from the saint. Together with the other Nordic royal saints, Canute of Denmark and Olav of Norway, St. Eric could be and was portrayed as a symbol of the Kalmar Union, and called upon as an intercessor on its behalf, and thus it is no surprise that according to a late sixteenth-century source, there was an altar in Lund Cathedral dedicated to the three Nordic holy kings, in addition to an altar dedicated solely to St. Eric. In other contexts, St. Eric was also a potent symbol and intercessor invoked by factions which sought to separate Sweden from the Kalmar Union, and those who sought to assert its status as a separate kingdom, governed by its own laws, within the Union.

Like St. Eric, St. Bridget, the last of the Swedish saints found in the Lund breviary, came to be a powerful and multivalent figure in late medieval Sweden and beyond. Her feast was celebrated in Lund on October 7, with the degree of duplex. Unlike many other Nordic saints, Birgitta Birgersdotter (1303–1373) was not a member of a royal dynasty nor associated with the early Christian mission. Instead, she belonged, by birth or marriage, to several of the leading families of fourteenth-century Sweden, and interacted (at various times) both in person and through her prophecies with members of the royal family and other leading political actors. It would appear likely that the support and favor that Bridget herself, and the religious order she founded, received from the royal dynasty of Sweden and from Queen Margaret and her heirs, arose both from personal ties and from theological motivations. It is well known that the young Queen Margaret, after her marriage to Håkon Magnusson, was brought up by Märta Ulfsdotter, the eldest daughter of Bridget. Margaret
would later distinguish herself as an active supporter of Vadstena Abbey and of the cult of its founder. In 1389, Margaret was among those who petitioned Pope Urban VI in support of the canonization of Bridget, who had died in 1373. The monarchs who would succeed Margaret as rulers of the Kalmar Union also shared her interest in and support for Bridget’s *Ordo Sanctissimi Salvatoris*. Jens E. Olesen has argued that the Birgittine order, and especially Vadstena, its first and most important house, played a central and unifying role in creating and maintaining a culture of the Kalmar Union, at least at the highest levels of society. He further suggests that the depictions of the three Nordic royal saints that became popular (at least in Skåne) during the period from around 1450 to 1520 arose from a Birgittine idea, in which the kings might be understood as “personifying symbols of the three Nordic kingdoms’ legal systems and written laws, each one distinct, but all anchored in God’s eternal law.” Like her order, St. Bridget herself may have been viewed as both a unifying symbol for the three kingdoms, and an intercessor for Union monarchs and for the Union itself. Olesen has noted, for example, that the enthusiasm Christian I had often expressed for Bridget as a patron of Sweden, her order, and her Revelations seemed to cool after his defeat at the hands of Swedish troops led by Sten Sture (the Elder) at the battle of Brunkeberg in October 1471. There are indications that the veneration of St. Bridget at Lund Cathedral may date from the earliest period of her cult. According to its oldest preserved statutes, dating from 1505, the greater clerical guild of Lund, the “sodalitium majus Lundense,” was dedicated to the cathedral’s two patrons, the Virgin Mary and St. Laurence, as well as to St. Bridget. The guild, which had its own altar in the cathedral, was founded by Archbishop Niels Jensen, who died in 1379, only a few years after Bridget herself. Gottfrid Carlsson considers it possible, though far from certain, that Bridget’s status as guild patron dates from the guild’s initial foundation. He notes that her veneration was the most characteristic aspect of the guild’s ceremonial, and also that another clerical guild in Lund, this one connected to the parish church of St. Nicholas, was also dedicated to St. Bridget. Archbishop Niels himself had a role in the promotion/recognition of Bridget’s cult, since in 1375 it had fallen to him, together with the bishop of Odense, to investigate the saint’s life and miracles as part of her canonization proceedings. By the end of the medieval period, at least two further altars were dedicated to Bridget, either in the company of other saints (Dean Folkvin’s altar from 1412) or alone (Barbara Thorkildsdatter Brahe’s altar from 1475). In addition, the cathedral had
an arm reliquary that depicted a hand holding a pen in its fingers, a clear reference to Bridget. This contained “a portion of Bridget’s fingers and a relic of Mary Magdalene.” St. Bridget’s feast day is also included in a long list of days on which visitors and contributors to Lund Cathedral might receive an indulgence of 200 days, in an undated letter of indulgence from Pope Eugenius IV (1431–1447). The Revelations of St. Bridget were widely read and disseminated in the late medieval world, and there is ample evidence that they were read and appreciated, by clergy and laity alike, in the Nordic countries. Thus it is by no means likely that specifically political issues are the sole motivation for the inclusion of the feast of St. Bridget, and the relatively high degree of motivation accorded it, in the Lund breviary. On the other hand, the combined effects of Bridget’s regional and international prestige, the generally close relationship between her order and leading proponents of the Kalmar Union, and perhaps even the fact that she was first new saint from the Nordic region to be canonized since the 1220s, make her relatively prominent place in late medieval Lund quite understandable.

In addition to the Danish and Swedish saints already discussed, the Lund breviary included just one Norwegian saint, St. Olav. It is no exaggeration to say that Olav, throughout and beyond the Nordic region, was the most widely and fervently venerated of all the Nordic saints. Like his Swedish counterpart, Norway’s royal martyr is celebrated in Lund with the degree of duplex, on his usual feast day, July 29.

Looking at the representation of Nordic saints in the cathedral cult in late medieval Lund, some interesting trends can be discerned. Although all of the more established Danish cults are represented in the calendar, only the two royal saints, Canute the King and Canute Lavard, are celebrated with especially high degree, and of these two, the cult of Canute the King is by far the more prominent. The only Norwegian saint represented is St. Olav, who is in some contexts the most powerful symbol of and intercessor for the kingdom of Norway, though in other contexts throughout the Nordic region he is an equally beloved intercessor without necessarily signaling a particular connection to Norway.

It is particularly interesting to note that the Lund calendar includes four Swedish saints, and that three of these are celebrated with higher degree (duplex) than any of the nonroyal Danish saints. How should this be understood? As noted above, all of the Swedish saints included have some claim to a national and not just regional importance in a Swedish context. St. Sigfrid is said to have baptized the first Christian king of
Sweden, and is thus a missionary for the entire kingdom and not only for the tiny diocese of Växjö which claimed him as its particular patron. By the fifteenth century, St. Eric had been promoted as the patron saint of the entire kingdom. He was also the second patron saint of the Archdiocese of Uppsala, a point of which we should not lose sight. St. Henry, whose legend portrays him as the bishop of Uppsala during the reign of St. Eric Jedvardsson, is both the patron saint of the important eastern Swedish diocese of Åbo and province of Finland, and a saint of importance in Uppsala. Finally, St. Bridget was a figure of undeniable prestige and importance in late medieval Christendom, and the founder of an order whose activities were often seen as promoting the interests of Kalmar Union leaders. Why do we see a relative emphasis on Swedish saints in this calendar, when only one Norwegian saint, albeit an important one, appears? Here, it is worth remembering a crucial point in Nordic ecclesiastical politics.

When the Archdiocese of Lund was established in about 1104, it encompassed the whole of the Nordic region. The Archdiocese of Nidaros, established in about 1153, made Norway, Iceland, Greenland, and the Western Isles independent of Lund. However, just over a decade later, when the Archdiocese of Uppsala was established, circumstances were rather different. The archbishop of Lund had been made papal legate on behalf of Sweden, and had been entrusted with the pallium intended for the Swedish archbishop, at the time of the creation of the Archdiocese of Nidaros. In 1164, when the Archdiocese of Uppsala was separated from Lund, the archbishop of Lund retained these privileges, and was made primate (primas) over Sweden. Lauritz Weibull has remarked that this relationship was a kind of middle position between the papacy and the Archdiocese of Uppsala, and that it involved both matters of constitution and of administration. As important as this status as primas undoubtedly was to Archbishop Eskil and the archbishops of Lund who followed him most directly, it seems to have played little role for most of the fourteenth century. However, late in that century, archbishops of Lund once again begin to title themselves “Primate of Sweden.” Magnus Nielsen, who became archbishop in 1379, was consistent in his use of the title, as were the archbishops who succeeded him. This particular relationship between the Danish and Swedish archbishoprics, quite different from the one between Lund and Nidaros, may well explain why Swedish saints are integrated into the cathedral cult at Lund to a greater extent than Norwegian ones, and also why they are celebrated with relatively high degree. From the point of view of the cathedral chapter at Lund, these
saints may have belonged to them as much as they did to Uppsala. As an examination of the late medieval calendar of Uppsala will show, this concept of an inclusive greater Lund was not necessarily recognized by the Swedes.

The cult of the Nordic saints in late medieval Uppsala diverges in interesting ways from that of Lund. In the calendar of the Uppsala Breviary, from 1496, no Danish saints are represented at all. Indeed, it appears that the earlier cult of St. Canute the King (and perhaps St. Canute Lavard) had largely waned by the fourteenth century, a trend that also occurred in several other Swedish sees, including Skara. Since the fading of this cult in Uppsala would seem to predate the veneration of St. Canute the King as a Danish national patron, and also, apparently, his inclusion among the patron saints of Lund Cathedral, it is reasonable to conclude that factors other than national feeling account for the omission. However, by the time of the late medieval Uppsala breviary, relations between the Nordic kingdoms and their churches had changed, and this may be reflected in the selection of saints celebrated at the cathedral.

Following calendar order, the first of the Nordic saints venerated in Uppsala was St. Henry the bishop, patron saint of the important eastern Swedish province of Finland and the diocese of Åbo. His feast was celebrated in Uppsala on January 19, with the degree of duplex and nine lessons. St. Sigfrid, reputed to have founded the southern Swedish diocese of Växjö, was celebrated in Uppsala on February 15 with the degree of semi-duplex and nine lessons. The royal martyr St. Eric, second patron saint of Uppsala Cathedral, was celebrated on May 18 with the degree of totum duplex. In addition, his translation was celebrated on January 24 with the degree of duplex and nine lessons.

St. Eskil was one of the two patron saints of the diocese of Strängnäs and the province of Södermanland. According to Ælnoth, the author of the early twelfth-century life of St. Canute the King, Eskil was a bishop who came from England to preach the Christian faith for the pagans in Sweden and was killed by them. The somewhat later legend associated with the offices of St. Eskil tells a similar story in greater detail. In this version, the English bishop Eskil came to preach in central Sweden during the reign of King Inge the elder (late eleventh century). As other sources also relate, the Christian Inge was for a time deposed by a pagan rival, Sven. According to his legend, Eskil was stoned to death in Strängnäs, near the site on which the cathedral would later be built, and buried in Tuna, which was some thirty kilometers away. St. Eskil’s feast was celebrated in Uppsala
on June 12 with the degree of semiduplex and nine lessons. Interestingly, although Eskil’s feast was not celebrated in Lund, the feast of his translation, October 6, was commemorated in Odense, the center of the cult of St. Canute the King.\footnote{59}

St. David the abbot is said to have been another missionary saint of English origin, who came to preach the Christian faith to the pagans of the region of Västmanland at the behest of St. Sigfrid. He was the (second) patron saint of the diocese of Västerås. His feast was observed in Uppsala on July 5, with the degree of three lessons.\footnote{60} The martyr St. Botvid is the second of the patron saints of the diocese of Strängnäs, alongside St. Eskil. He is said to have been a layman from Södermanland who was baptized in England and murdered by his slave in the early twelfth century, and his cult is well attested from that century. His feast day was celebrated in Uppsala on July 28 with nine lessons.\footnote{61} St. Olav, the martyred king of Norway, was an important saint in Uppsala, as he was in many other parts of the Nordic region. His feast was celebrated in Uppsala on July 29, with the degree of semiduplex and nine lessons.

St. Helena, or Elin, the martyred widow from Skövde in the province of Västergötland, was venerated as the patron saint of the diocese of Skara as early as the twelfth century. She is said to have been a pious Christian who undertook a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, only to be murdered while she was on her way to attend the consecration of the church in Götene, near her own home. Her feast day was observed in Uppsala on July 31, with nine lessons.\footnote{62}

St. Katherine of Vadstena was the daughter and companion of St. Bridget, and implemented many of St. Bridget’s plans for her new monastic order and for Vadstena Abbey. Like Bridget herself, St. Katherine was associated with the diocese of Linköping. Miracles were attributed to Katherine after her death in 1381, and a canonization process was initiated during the 1470s. Her cult was authorized for the Nordic countries and the Birgittine Order, and her relics were enshrined in 1489. Her feast was commemorated in Uppsala on August 2, and was the second feast listed for that date. St. Bridget herself was celebrated in Uppsala on her customary feast day of October 7, with nine lessons.\footnote{63}

Each diocese of the Swedish Church is represented by at least one saint in the Uppsala breviary. In addition to these feasts of individual saints, the Uppsala calendar includes the (as Helander puts it) “grandiose” \textit{Festum patronorum regni Suecie}, celebrated on a Sunday between July 10 and 16. This group of national patron saints included all of the
“Swedish” saints featured individually in the calendar, as well as the Virgin Mary, John the Baptist, St. Laurence (the original patron saint of Uppsala Cathedral) and St. Ansgar. Moreover, Helander makes a direct connection between the introduction of this new feast day at the Arboga Council of 1474, and a growing sense of Swedish nationalism following the battle of Brunkeberg in 1471, in which the Danish troops of King Christian I were defeated by Swedish troops led by Sten Sture. It is certainly worth noting that the timing of this new feast day corresponds exactly with the celebration of the feast of St. Canute the King in Lund. With regard to the degree of veneration accorded the Nordic saints in Uppsala, Helander has made the important point that the Uppsala church was extremely restrained in degree of veneration for all feast days. While these saints were typically celebrated with higher degree in other Swedish sees, it should be remembered that the degree of duplex, accorded St. Henry, is actually very high by Uppsala’s standards.

In contrast to the late medieval calendar in Lund, then, the Uppsala calendar shows some interesting traits. While the Lund calendar includes a goodly number of Swedish saints alongside its Danish ones, with St. Olav as the sole Norwegian saint; Olav is the only one of the Nordic saints in the Uppsala calendar whose cult is not of Swedish origin. Moreover, while there are certainly circumstances in which St. Olav could be and was understood as a specifically Norwegian intercessor and symbol, even in an explicitly Swedish context, his prominence in Uppsala does not appear to be such a case. Devotion to this saint in Sweden, and in Uppsala itself, was extremely well established from an early point. Olav’s inclusion in the Uppsala breviary is largely a recognition of his general importance and popularity in Swedish religious life. Moreover, as Ingrid Lundegårdh has argued, the prominence of St. Olav in the cathedral cult of Uppsala also has to do with that important saint’s great popularity in the northernmost areas of the Swedish archdiocese. In an attempt to divert pilgrimage, and even tax payments, that had previously gone to the Norwegian Archdiocese of Nidaros, the Uppsala church founded an altar dedicated to St. Olav in the early fourteenth century and strengthened his cult.

The relative inclusiveness of Swedish saints in the Lund calendar seems directly related to the claim of primacy that the archbishops of Lund, especially from the late fourteenth century onward, made over the archbishops of Uppsala. Likewise, it seems likely that the Uppsala breviary’s inclusion of saints from each of the Swedish ecclesiastical provinces, its exclusion of any Danish saints, and even the celebration of the feast of
the patron saints of Sweden during the precise week that Lund celebrated the feast of St. Canute the King, may have politically-tinged motivations.

It is fair to say that while the political concerns of religious leaders in the late medieval Nordic kingdoms were closely related to, and perhaps inextricable from secular politics, they were not necessarily identical with them. As leading members of the councils of the realms (riksråd), bishops, like lay members of the aristocracy, were concerned with constitutional issues in relation to the Kalmar Union. At least as far back as the reign of Eric of Pomerania (ca. 1412–1439), the councils of the various realms attempted to assert the obligation of Union monarchs to obey and subject themselves to the established laws of the kingdoms they governed, while in many cases, Union monarchs considered that their kingship placed them above all national laws. To some extent this is also true of the fifteenth-century Swedish king, Karl Knutsson, and uncrowned regents of Sweden such as Sten Sture. In some cases, the particular points of conflict between monarch and council related to matters of the freedom of the church, as when Eric of Pomerania attempted to force the cathedral chapter of Uppsala to accept his candidate(s) for the office of archbishop over their own in the early 1430s.68

Interestingly, however, even in periods when relations between the councils of the realm and the Union monarchs were relatively calm, conflicts could erupt in the more strictly ecclesiastical realm. By and large, the reign of Christopher of Bavaria (1440–48) could be regarded as a relatively calm period in the history of the Kalmar Union. As Herman Schück notes,

The constitutional idea of a personal union of kingdoms governed independently by councils became more of a reality than in any other period. In Christopher’s reign, which corresponded with the council of Basel, the Nordic churches gained their greatest degree of independence. The archbishops Hans Laxmand in Lund, Aslak Bolt in Trondheim, and Nicolaus Ragvaldi in Uppsala appeared as the leading men of their kingdoms and were able to improve the position of their various churches.69

However, this relative calm on the secular front, and even in relations between monarch and church, did not prevent conflicts from erupting on the level of specifically ecclesiastical relations. In 1444, on his way to the Kalmar meeting of the Nordic council, the newly installed archbishop of Lund, Tue Nielsen, chose to have a processional cross carried before
him as he made his way through Sweden. The Swedish bishops interpreted this act as an assertion of the authority of Lund over Uppsala, implying that Sweden belonged to the Danish ecclesiastical province, and as a reassertion of the matter of primacy maintained by the Danes and denied by the Swedes. It was vigorously protested, first by the bishops of Linköping, Strängnäs, and Växjö, who were present at the meeting, and later by the archbishop of Uppsala, who was not.70

The question of whether the archbishops of Lund could claim primacy over those of Uppsala arose again in the same way, decades later, at the Kalmar meeting of 1482, where the issue of the succession of King Hans to the Union throne after the death of Christian I was to be discussed. This meeting was attended by the archbishop of Uppsala and the bishops of Linköping, Skara, Strängnäs, and Växjö, as well as twenty-one Swedish magnates. Once he had arrived in Kalmar, the archbishop of Lund, Jens Brostorp (whose first Union meeting this was), made a point of having his processional cross carried before him. According to Gösta Kellerman, this must be interpreted as a renewed claim of primacy over the Swedish ecclesiastical province. In spite of Danish archbishops’ use of the title primas, the archbishops of Uppsala had for some time turned directly to Rome for their consecration and to receive the pallium, so that the claim of primacy was more formal than pragmatic. This action on the part of Archbishop Jens elicited a strong protest from the Swedish archbishop, Jakob Ulvsson, who both insisted that the two provinces must remain separate as they had (he claimed) previously been, and accused his Danish counterpart of putting the Kalmar Union at risk.71

It has been asserted that the Kalmar Union brought about a great change in the church of Lund, so that the latter’s main political objective from the end of the fourteenth century until the reign of Christian II was the preservation of the Nordic community, and its reunification during the periods in which it fell apart.72 In this sense, the interests of the church and those of the rulers of Denmark were more or less compatible. If the primacy of Lund over Uppsala could be upheld, it could only serve the interests of a union ruled over by monarchs based mainly in Denmark. In Sweden, circumstances were often more complicated.

From the point of view of many Swedish prelates, the independence of the Archdiocese of Uppsala from the Archdiocese of Lund did not necessarily require that the kingdom of Sweden must be ruled by an exclusively Swedish king, rather than a Union monarch (though that was certainly one possible solution). Just as possible, and indeed, something
the prelates often supported, was the idea of a distinct Swedish kingdom, with its own separate and distinct legal code, ruled over by a monarch of the Kalmar Union who agreed to be bound by those laws, much as during the reign of Christopher of Bavaria. In many cases, the bishops and archbishops of Sweden, much like the noblemen who were their colleagues in the council of the realm, found that the independence of the church was threatened just as much by the actions of “Swedish” rulers such as Karl Knutsson or Sten Sture as by Union monarchs.

In this context, it is worth considering how we should understand the term “national saint.” An answer might be that national saints in a narrow sense arise to a great extent when there is conflict between the kingdoms. The cults of St. Canute the King and St. Canute Lavard were originally promoted for specifically dynastic purposes. Neither at that point, nor when these saints were widely promoted as guild patrons, is there reason for them to be regarded as especially “national” in character, especially in terms of their reception. The feast of St. Canute the King (and in Västerås also Canute Lavard) continued to be celebrated in the Swedish bishoprics of Linköping and Västerås until the end of the medieval period. This is probably not an expression of a political position with respect to the Kalmar Union, but rather a continuation of an old tradition in areas where the guilds of St. Canute remained important. In this context, the veneration of St. Canute would resemble that of St. Olav in many parts of medieval Sweden and Denmark, where that saint is regarded as a powerful intercessor for reasons that may have nothing to do with Norway. However, the cult of the patrons of Sweden was heavily promoted in a period when the Swedish kingdom’s status within the Kalmar Union was uncertain, and when, at the same time, the independence of the Swedish church, both from the temporal rulers and from the church of Denmark, was also in question. Thus, the cult of the saints in late-medieval Lund and Uppsala, as represented mainly by their late-medieval calendars, reflects a tendency toward inclusion and integration of Swedish saints in Lund, and a tendency to reject everything Danish while promoting the cults of “native” Swedish saints in Uppsala.
NOTES


5 Sven Helander, Den medeltida Uppsalaliturgin. Studier i helgonlängd, tidsgärd och messa (Stockholm, 2001). Also of note is Helander’s study on the cult of St. Ansgar, Ansgarskulten i Norden (Stockholm, 1989).


18 Ibid., p. 84.

19 Jørgensen, Helgendyrkelse, p. 44.


26 Gad, Legenden, pp. 170–72;


29 See Tuomas Heikilä, Sankt Henriksslegenden (Helsinki, 2009).

30 Heikilä, Sankt Henriksslegenden, p. 86.


46 Ibid., p. 207.
51 Ibid., p. 94.
52 Ibid., p. 119.

For all feast days above, see Grotefend, *Zeitrechnung*, 2:243–46.


Ibid., p. 205.

Ibid., p. 253.


The protest of the bishops, dated Kalmar, June 11, 1444, is published in *Diplomatarium dioecesis Lundensis*, vol. 3, no. 258, pp. 274–78, while the archbishop’s protest, dated Arnö, July 20, 1444, is printed as no. 259, pp. 280–84; see also Carlsson, “Lunds ärkesäte,” pp. 515–56.
